



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Join us today as we kick off National Tourism Week at our new downtown Phoenix Visitor Information Center! To celebrate the opening of the center, the public is invited to an Open House on Monday, May 12 from noon to 2 p.m.

The Visitor Information Center is located at 125 North Second Street, directly across from the Hyatt Regency Phoenix hotel. Refreshments will be served, and visitors can enter to win raffle prizes that include handmade Paolo Soleri Windbells and resort stays at The Westin Kierland Resort and Spa and the Ritz Carlton, Phoenix.

As the result of a great collaboration between AOT and the Greater Phoenix Conventions & Visitors Bureau, the center has become the focal point for visitor information. Open weekdays from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., there are more than 500 brochures representing every region of the state for visitors to explore. Through innovative technology, which includes a 43-inch interactive map, the center not only enables visitors to see the majestic beauty of our state, but to also learn more about all the amazing tourist destinations in Arizona.

In addition to the Open House, Arizona joins hundreds of cities, states and travel-related businesses nationwide in recognition of the 25th Annual National Tourism Week, held May 10-18. Designated by Congress and established by presidential proclamation in 1983, the event highlights the value of the nation's \$703 billion travel industry and the economic impact tourism brings to America.

This year's theme, "Discover Great American Traditions," encourages travel to American locales and highlights the role tourism plays in discovering the icons of a destination.

In 2006, a record 33 million domestic and international overnight travelers experienced Arizona, spending \$18.6 billion. This equates to visitation that is five times the size of Arizona's

population base. In fact, the travel industry pumps almost \$51 million directly into Arizona's economy everyday. Direct travel spending in Arizona generates \$2.6 billion in local, state and federal tax revenues annually, and potentially saves each Arizona household an estimated \$1,150.

For more information National Tourism Week, visit www.tia.org.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Open House!

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Deadline Extended for Governor's Tourism Award Nominations!

AOT is extending the deadline to submit your nominations for the **2008 Governor's Tourism Awards**. These industry awards honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions during the past year for the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

The awards will be presented at the 28th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson on July 10, 2008.

All submissions must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 30, 2008.

Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](http://www.azot.gov) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms. For more information, contact Kiva Couchon at 602-364-3724 or via e-mail at kcouchon@azot.gov.

To register for the conference please visit, www.aztourismconference.com.

Call for 2009 Events!

AOT is requesting dates for major events taking place in 2009. Please be sure to indicate the specific dates and note if events are able to accommodate or are specifically geared for tour groups. We are already receiving requests for 2009 calendar information from both media and tour operators. Please continue to send the remainder of 2008 dates if they have not yet been sent. Any information on events and 2009 dates may be forwarded to Marjorie Magnusson at mmagnusson@azot.gov.

SAVE the DATE: ATU Workshop – How to Create Effective Collateral Material

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop: **"How to Create Effective Collateral Material."**

Are you looking for ways to make your brochures, rack cards, flyers, travel guides and fact sheets stand out from the pack? Do you want to learn how to get the biggest bang for your buck and how to avoid expensive mistakes when producing printed marketing materials? Join us for the next ATU workshop **"How to Create Effective Collateral Materials"** and you will learn about the five key processes in creating brochures, guides and other travel collateral – from project inception to the distribution of your final product. Find out about the best practices in creating collateral materials from a professional travel writing editor. Hear about design and print production considerations from a printer. Learn tips and strategies that will result in marketing collateral that delivers. Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or mdorn@azot.gov.

The workshop will be held in the following locations:

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[Blazin' M Ranch](#)

Cottonwood, AZ, 86326

928-634-0334

Thursday, May 15, 2008

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort](#)

10000 N. Oracle Rd

Tucson, AZ 85704

520-544-5000

SAVE the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops are here!

The Grand Impressions workshop is a full day of education and training designed to empower tourism and visitor services professionals by offering:

- A customer service training program, featuring unique ways to get you and your staff to think "outside the jar" - if you miss this opportunity, you'll be green with envy!
- An amazing presentation on Arizona tourism attractions by Brian Lang.
- May 30 – A tour of local attractions including the Pimeria Alta, Historic Court House, Art Gallery, Kino Springs, Hacienda Corona de Guevavi and Wine tasting.
- June 6 - A tour of the Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory and a visit to the Flagstaff Arboretum, complete with a Live Birds of Prey Demonstration by the High Country Raptors.

Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion, a complimentary lunch and free resource materials from presenters. **(Community and Attractions attendees: Please feel free to bring your information to share with participants.)**

The Grand Impressions workshops are free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as seating is

limited. For more information, or to make a reservation for the workshop, contact Meghan Dorn at **602-364-3708** or mdorn@azot.gov.

Workshop Dates and Locations:

Nogales, Arizona

May 29 from 6-8 p.m.

Grand Impressions Attendees Reception at Esplendor Resort Terrace - The City of Nogales is rolling out the red carpet for those who wish to arrive the night before and immerse themselves in the culture!

Esplendor Resort

1069 Camino Caralampi
Rio Rico, Arizona 85648
Phone: 520-281-1901

May 30

Grand Impressions Workshop

Holiday Inn Nogales

850 W. Shell Rd
Nogales, Arizona 85621
Phone: 520.281.0123

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

Flagstaff, Arizona

June 6, 2008

Grand Impressions Workshop

Lowell Observatory

1400 W. Mars Hill Road
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001
Phone: 928.233.3210

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

AOT Staff Earns Procurement Certification

AOT congratulates Mary Ellen Kane, Procurement and Grant Manager, for earning her **Certification in Arizona State Public Procurement (CASPP)**. She was awarded the certificate by William Bell, Director of the Arizona Department of Administration. A total of 60 candidates were awarded the certification. Jean Clark, State Procurement Administrator, announced that Arizona is one of only three states in the nation to establish a statewide certification program. The State Procurement Office started this course at the beginning of this fiscal year. The program for certification is offered to state, county, city, and school district procurement personnel throughout Arizona.

We would like to recognize Mary Ellen's efforts in achieving this designation and congratulate her on her success.

AOT Research Section Updates

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- Airport Passenger Volume January 2008
- Airport Passenger Volume February 2008
- Gross Sales and Taxes February 2008
- Lodging Performance March 2008 (By County)
- Lodging Performance March 2008
- State Park Visitation February 2008
- Painted Cliffs Welcome Center Visitor Counts 1st Quarter 2008
- Phoenix Convention Center Visitor Center Visitor Counts 1st Quarter 2008

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Co-hosts Arts, Architecture and Cultural Media Tour

AOT partnered with the Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau to host the Dynamic Desert Design Group Media Tour April 21-25. The trip showcased Scottsdale's arts, architecture and cultural offerings as well as featured some of the city's world-class resorts, notable architects and artists. Journalists were treated to an insider's tour of Taliesin West with Arnold Roy, architect and former apprentice of Frank Lloyd Wright's. They also had the opportunity to tour downtown Scottsdale's new urban development and the city's extensive public art collection as well as the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. Other trip highlights included the Scottsdale ArtWalk through the downtown arts districts and conversations with local artists, architects, educators, curators, performers and scholars such as Paolo Soleri, Ace Bailey, and Vernon Swaback. A total of 10 journalists participated in this press trip representing five different countries including the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Germany and the United Kingdom. For more information, contact Erica Rich at 602-364-3698 or via e-mail at erich@azot.gov.

AOT Participates in Eastern Canada Media Mission

AOT organized and participated in a media mission to Eastern Canada, April 28 – May 2. Together with the Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau, Scottsdale CVB and Tempe CVB, AOT had one-on-one appointments with media in three of Eastern Canada's largest cities, including Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, to discuss Arizona's latest news and developments as well as pitch unique story ideas. Over the course of the five-day mission, the Arizona delegation met with 23 key members of the travel media. For more information, contact Erica Rich at 602-364-3698 or via e-mail at erich@azot.gov.

AAA FAM Tour

AOT's Travel Industry Marketing division recently hosted eight AAA travel agents on a familiarization tour titled "Explore the Navajo Nation." Two of the agents were from New York, the rest of the group were from Arizona, Florida, New Jersey, Ohio, and Washington. This very well-received familiarization tour made stops in Tempe, Window Rock, and Tuba City. The group enjoyed a hike to Canyon de Chelly and the Navajo National Monument and a jeep tour of Monument Valley. If you would like additional information, please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Industry News

Congratulations to the Tucson and Valley Ambassadors Program.

Both the Tucson Ambassadors Program and the Valley Tourism Ambassadors Program are celebrating milestones this week. The Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau will celebrate the first anniversary of the Tucson Ambassadors Program (TAP) with a luncheon on Monday, May 12 at Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa. City of Tucson Mayor Robert E. Walkup will be in attendance to help acknowledge the impact that our frontline hospitality ambassadors have on tourism in our community and to congratulate the nearly 400 individuals that have earned the national designation of Certified Tourism Ambassador™ (CTA).

The Valley Tourism Ambassadors Program and the Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau Consortium will celebrate the certification of its first 1,000 CTAs with a Reception at the new Tempe Center for the Arts on Wednesday, May 14. CTAs will have the opportunity to tour the center, learn about Valley attractions and receive updates from our Convention & Visitor Bureaus.

The Ambassadors Programs exist to increase tourism in the region by motivating and inspiring frontline hospitality staff to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. To earn the CTA designation, participants must complete the pre-class reading, assignments, a half-day class, and pass an examination. This fun and interactive program is a great way to connect with others in the industry, learn about the area, and develop a greater understanding of the importance of tourism. Tucson and Greater Phoenix are the second and third cities, respectively, in the nation to be accredited by the Tourism Ambassador Institute™ to conduct the Certified Tourism Ambassador™ Program. For more information on either program, please visit www.tucsonambassadors.com or www.valleytourismambassadors.com.

TIA Says Gas Prices Won't Affect Travel Plans of Most Americans

Six of 10 Americans who are currently planning a trip by car, truck or SUV this summer will not change their travel plans even with additional increases in the price of gasoline, according to the TravelHorizons survey, co-authored by the Travel Industry Association and Ypartnership. One of six (16 percent) of those expecting a tax rebate as part of the economic stimulus package approved by Congress is planning to spend their rebate on an overnight or day trip for leisure purposes, according to the survey of 2,233 adults conducted during the month of April. Among the 41 percent of respondents who stated their plans would change if gas prices rise further, the greatest percentage (38 percent) would simply drive a shorter distance to their vacation destination. Some 36 percent of respondents said they would take fewer trips and/or cancel a trip, while 30 percent said they would spend less on souvenirs and shopping. Details at 202-408-2183. *(Special to TA)*

Survey: Many Feel Poorer But Still Plan Longer Trips

More than half of Americans travelers feel they have less money to spend on summer travel than they did last year, according to a new survey from AOL Travel and Zogby International, a public opinion polling firm. However, the findings indicate that they're not acting like they have less money. The Summer Vacation Survey found that 57 percent of Americans feel they have less money to spend on their summer vacations, and are looking for ways to save on travel costs. To save money, 33 percent said they plan to stay with friends or family rather than at a hotel, while 20 percent plan to use a vacation rental instead of a hotel. Another 37 percent said they plan to drive rather than fly. But 69 percent said fuel prices are not influencing where they plan to travel, and 60 percent said they are not being influenced by the declining strength of the dollar, even if

considering international travel. While many said they have less money, most are still planning longer vacations, far from home. (www.TravelTrade.com, 5/2)

Girlfriends' Getaways Booming

Girlfriends' getaways--where women travel with other women and leave the menfolk at home--are booming. And the phenomenon is not just about bachelorette parties or 20ish gals on spring break. Women are taking knitting trips, adventure trips and spa trips. Marybeth Bond, the author of "50 Best Girlfriends Getaways in North America," has been tracking data since 1993. She says there has been a 230 percent increase in the number of women-only travel companies in the last seven years. And many women who are taking girlfriends' getaways are married--but leaving their husbands at home. (AP; www.PhiladelphiaInquirer.com/Travel, Sun.)

U.S. Luxury Hotel Market Stays Hot

U.S. luxury hotel occupancy averaged more than 72 percent in March, showing that the demand is not as affected by the economy as other hotel categories, according to Jan Freitag, a vice president of Smith Travel Research. Luxury travel's March performance was the best of any hotel category. Average daily rates were \$323.80 (up 5.6 percent from March 2007) and revenue per available room rose 1.5 percent over last March — more than any other hotel segment. "People who stay in luxury hotels are either insulated from the general economy trend because they're independently wealthy, or they are traveling on business at a (high) level," Mr. Freitag says. Customers "want to pay up and buy the best room," Paul McManus, president and CEO of The Leading Hotels of the World, told an April media roundtable in Washington, D.C. His global consortium of about 450 hotels, which had its best year ever in 2007, is booking lots of the "new wealthy," including Russians, Chinese, millionaires from India and self-made US moguls. "Time is luxury for a lot of customers, and that's why they'll pay more," said Jim FitzGibbon, president of worldwide operations for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. (Report by David Wilkening, *TravelMole e-newsletter*)